

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director, Children, Young People & Education

To: Corporate Parenting Panel, 19th September 2018

Subject: **Report on children and young people in Cookham Wood Young Offenders Institute (YOI) and Medway Secure Training Centre (STC)**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides the members with an overview of the support and safeguarding of children and young people in custody, either on remand or as part of a sentence.

Recommendation: Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to **NOTE** the report on the support and safeguarding of children and young people in custody.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Corporate Parenting Panel requested a report on the numbers of young people held in custody and how their needs are met by the professionals that are involved in their care. Services to support young people are provided by agencies within the secure estate and by community-based professionals who either see young people in custody or who support them on their return to the community.
- 1.2. The majority of young people in Kent will be placed either in Medway Secure Training Centre (STC) or Cookham Wood Young Offenders Institute (YOI). Medway STC houses girls aged up to 17 and boys aged 12-15 years and vulnerable boys aged 16-17 years. Cookham Wood houses boys aged 15-17 years. Both establishments take young people primarily from the South East including London.
- 1.3. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (Section 104) introduced the provision that any child remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation would be treated as a Looked After Child by the designated Local Authority for the period of the remand. Since 2015 this has had the following impact:

CIC Status (before or at Remand)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Grand Total
At Remand	21	19	10	50
Before Remand	9	9	14	32
Grand Total	30	28	24	82

2. Data

- 1.1. In 2017/18 in Kent there were twenty young people from Kent who were sentenced to custody. Four of these young people received two custodial sentences within the year, due to being convicted of old or previous offences whilst in custody.

- 1.2. The length of sentences imposed were from four months to sixty-two months. Eleven of the twenty young people were Kent Looked After Children. One young person was aged fifteen at the time of their sentence. All others were either sixteen or seventeen years old.
- 1.3. In the same time period there were twenty-four young people who were remanded to youth detention before their trial. Fourteen of these young people were Kent Looked After Children. One young person was aged fourteen, and one aged fifteen. All the others were aged sixteen or seventeen years old at the time of their remand.

3. Inspection Reports

1.1. Cookham Wood YOI

- 1.1.1. Cookham Wood was inspected by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons in August 2017, and the latest action plan was published in May 2018. The initial report assessed the YOI against four criteria: Safety; Respect; Purposeful Activity and Resettlement. The report identified areas of concern within all four criteria, and 'Respect' was judged to be of a good standard.
- 1.1.2. The action plan published in May 2018 identifies that there is an improvement in how violence within the YOI is managed and increases in staffing are planned. It notes that there have been improvements in how young people can communicate with professionals or can raise concerns within the YOI.
- 1.1.3. The exchange of assessments between Youth Offending Teams and Cookham Wood has improved through the implementation of a system to share and update Asset+ documentation.
- 1.1.4. Access to education and training has improved and more young people are able to take up the offer of 25 hours of education per week. The YOI is in the process of recruiting additional staff in order to be able to provide a full regime at all times. The resettlement team is now at full strength which supports a strong focus on the resettlement of young people.

1.2. Medway STC

- 1.2.1. Medway STC was inspected in May 2018 by Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Care Quality Commission. The report noted that the establishment had improved in all areas, whilst also acknowledging that there was still work to be done.
- 1.2.2. The report identified that the atmosphere within the centre, and the integration of young people into a well-run regime, was a positive feature of the changes that had been made. The report noted that the relationships between young people and staff were 'respectful and meaningful'.
- 1.2.3. There are now Social Workers deployed within the Centre which supports a more effective approach to safeguarding young people.
- 1.2.4. It identified that improvements on particular issues or themes, such as self-harm or the risk young people pose to others, were evident but still required further implementation in order to be assessed as being 'good'.

- 1.2.5. The report requested improvements to how the centre communicates with outside agencies should safeguarding issues occur and also identified that planning for resettlement needed to be considered as early as possible.

2. Support from KCC

- 2.1. Young people who are placed in custody will all have allocated a Youth Justice worker. The young person will be visited within 5 working days, and a planning meeting with family and relevant professionals will take place within 15 working days.
- 2.2. The Youth Justice worker will be the point of contact for the YOI or STC to ensure that the young person has regular contact with family members, significant professionals and friends with whom contact has been approved.
- 2.3. Looked After Children will be supported by both their Social Worker and the Youth Justice worker. The two professionals will attend all meetings and plans will be coordinated. The focus of the plans will be to support a positive reintegration back into the community. The Social Worker continues to undertake statutory visits as they would for any Looked After Child.
- 2.4. The young person will be allocated a worker within the STC or YOI who will be responsible for seeing the young person regularly and passing on any information or concerns to the family and professionals.
- 2.5. In addition to this, young people have better access to community-based services; Both establishments have installed telephones in every young person's room so that they are able to contact approved numbers at any time. This has improved the young people's sense of wellbeing and reduced levels of anxiety.

3. Healthcare and Education

- 1.1. Both Medway and Cookham Wood have healthcare providers based in the establishment. These providers are responsible for services around physical and mental health. There are also substance misuse services based inside the centres.
- 1.2. All services are required to liaise with community-based services so that treatment and support can continue on release. Each young person has a resettlement plan which will detail health needs.
- 1.3. Physical health treatment in the community will be arranged through a young person's GP. Support around mental health will be provided by the North East London Foundation Trust, who are in contact with in-house services and are part of the resettlement planning.
- 1.4. Community-based services are reliant on there being effective resettlement planning, and suitable accommodation being secured and available in advance of the young person's release. In Kent, no young people were released from custody to unsuitable accommodation in 2017/18.
- 1.5. Young people should receive 25 hours of education per week whilst in custody. This includes English and Maths and can be provided at a level to suit the young person's needs.

- 1.6. There is physical activity available to all young people, and Cookham Wood has an art department which has produced pieces of art that have won awards with the Koestler Trust. A range of different activities are provided as part of evening sessions on both sites.
- 1.7. Young people can be given Release on Temporary Licence to attend college interviews or participate in community-based learning.
- 1.8. Resettlement plans will focus on maintaining the skills and learning of young people. Resettlement meetings will include the custody-based education providers, and representative from Virtual School Kent; the Inclusion and Attendance Service, colleges or schools are invited whenever appropriate.

2. Future Plans

- 1.1. Youth Justice and Kent's Children's Social Work Services are in discussion with Medway and Cookham Wood to develop additional services for young people. These include:
 - i. The recruitment of a Youth Justice apprentice who will support how the service hears from young people and ensures that their views are reflected in the work done by the service.
 - ii. Development of a trauma-informed resettlement service. Many young people in custody have experienced trauma during their childhood and have not always had the opportunity to access services to address this. A trauma-informed approach will focus on developing strong, positive relationships with young people so that they are confident to engage with other services.
 - iii. The advocacy service provided by The Young Lives Foundation for Kent Looked After Children will be available to all Kent young people in Cookham Wood and Medway.
 - iv. Both organisations have welcomed recent visits by Louise Fisher, Head of YOS to review our safeguarding of Kent Young People. Further visits are planned to progress our joint working.
 - v. The Care Leavers service now have a dedicated Youth Offending Coordinator, working with our 18+ young people.

2. Participation at Corporate Parenting Panel

- 2.1. Members had requested that a young person with a history of youth offending should attend Corporate Parenting Panel to be able to share their views of the service they have received.
- 2.2. Youth Justice are in the process of appointing a Youth Justice Apprentice and once they have been appointed they will attend Corporate Parenting Panel. The Apprentice will be able to talk about their own experiences and represent the experiences of others within the criminal justice system.

8. Summary

- 1.1. Young people in custody, including Looked After Children, are experiencing a greater level of support from professionals than was previously the case.
- 1.2. Both Medway STC and Cookham Wood YOI have been inspected and have received positive reports from Inspectors.
- 1.3. The ability for young people to report their concerns and for professionals to be involved with the young people has improved, which has strengthened the safeguarding of children and young people in custody.

Recommendations:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to **NOTE** the report on the support and safeguarding of children and young people in custody.

Background Documents:

None

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